

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA RELEASE

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VERMONT OFFICIALS REACT TO TASK FORCE REPORT ON AUGUST 2003 BLACKOUT

Montpelier, VT – Vermont officials responded with support to the Final Report of the U.S.-Canada Power System Outage Task Force, which was issued today by the U.S. Secretary of Energy and the Canadian Minister of Natural Resources. The report identifies the causes of the worst blackout in North American history, August 14, 2003. The document explores the reasons the outage was not contained and presents technical and policy recommendations to prevent or minimize future blackouts.

"The blackout had a dramatic impact on the health and safety of individuals and the economies of the Midwest and Northeast. This event brought into clear focus the concrete steps that must be taken in the area of grid reliability," said Public Service Commissioner David O'Brien. The recommendations of the Task Force included:

- # Implementation of mandatory and enforceable electricity reliability standards in both the US and Canada.
- # Strengthening the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC).
- # Developing a funding mechanism for NERC and the regional reliability councils, in order to ensure their independence from the parties they oversee.
- # Addressing deficiencies in system participants and some reliability organizations by June 30, 2004.
- # Improving training and certification requirements for operators, reliability coordinators and operator support staff.

Department of Public Service staff participated in two working groups that contributed to the Task Force report, including the Nuclear Working Group and the Electric System Working Group. Commissioner O'Brien praised the Task Force effort saying, "The Department of Energy and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission staff, and countless other industry and government personnel who worked to develop and refine this critical report should be commended for their fine work on our collective behalf."

O'Brien highlighted a key recommendation of the Task Force, stating, "One of the most noteworthy recommendations in this report is that reliability standards must become mandatory and enforceable, and, further, that our reliability organizations must be strengthened. These changes have been needed for quite some time. Hopefully the experience of last summer will motivate our Congress to put aside politics as usual and enact the measures called for in this report."

The report is available <https://reports.energy.gov> .

